

Exhibit A

The New York Times | <https://nyti.ms/38PIbMb>

What Happened Between E. Jean Carroll and Elle Magazine?

Her contract was terminated early, but the fashion magazine maintains it wasn't because of her allegations against President Trump.



By Katherine Rosman and Jessica Bennett

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In the fall of 2017, when Nina Garcia, the fashion editor and “Project Runway” judge, became the editor in chief of Elle magazine, E. Jean Carroll felt she needed to fight for her job.

Ms. Garcia was remaking the staff and was scaling back on lucrative contracts the magazine offered freelance contributors like Ms. Carroll, who had written the Ask E. Jean advice column since 1993.

But rather than dash off a pleading email, as many writers might, Ms. Carroll did something more in line with her outsize personality: She showed up at the offices of Hearst Magazines, the publisher of Elle, with a stack of hula hoops. “I said, ‘Here’s some hula hoops, let’s get it going girl!’” she recalled in a phone interview.

Ms. Garcia appeared to love it.

“Oh, my God, I adore E. Jean!” she said in a 2018 interview, about a year after taking over. “She’s just so perfect for this generation. Her voice is so modern, quirky, and cheeky. While everybody on Twitter thinks they could be the E. Jean, she is the E. Jean!”

The same month that the interview ran, Ms. Garcia agreed to provide a blurb for Ms. Carroll’s forthcoming memoir, “What Do We Need Men For?,” praising her work at Elle. At that point, Ms. Carroll had shared the book’s contents with very few people, and Ms. Garcia had not read it.

“E. Jean Carroll is a force of nature, whose natural vibrancy has held readers in rapture for decades,” read Ms. Garcia’s blurb, which was printed on the back cover.

In the book, which recounts stories from her life, Ms. Carroll accuses Donald Trump of raping her in a department store dressing room in the mid-1990s. The details were revealed in an excerpt in New York magazine in June of 2019, just before the book was published, and quickly picked up by news outlets around the world.

Mr. Trump denied ever meeting Ms. Carroll, calling her a liar. (“She’s not my type,” he told The Hill.) Several months later, she filed a defamation suit against him. She argued he had damaged her reputation and her career by denying that her story was true, and by saying that she took money from his political opponents to fabricate the allegation.

Elle covered the story, reporting on her book’s revelations and the reaction to them on its website. It also ran a column in print (but not online) last fall in which Ms. Carroll explained why she had decided to come forward at last.

But by December 2019, Elle's regard for its columnist had changed. Ms. Carroll, 76, was contacted by a Hearst editor, Erin Hobday, who asked if she was free for a call; Ms. Carroll thought she was being invited to the company holiday party.

Instead, she was informed that her contract, which was supposed to go through July of this year, was being terminated. She was asked to invoice for the remaining four columns, which would not be published and for which Ms. Carroll said she still has not been paid.

"We and your readers so appreciate your many years of work for the magazine, and the wonderful columns you contributed to our publication," Ms. Hobday wrote in an email, adding: "We will miss you tremendously."

'A Beloved Voice'

On Feb. 18, Ms. Carroll wrote on Twitter: "Because Trump ridiculed my reputation, laughed at my looks, & dragged me through the mud, after 26 years, ELLE ! red me. I don't blame Elle. It was the great honor of my life writing 'Ask E. Jean.' I blame @realdonaldtrump."

Earlier that day, her lawyers had disclosed in a court filing in connection to her defamation suit against Mr. Trump that Elle had killed the Ask E. Jean column, which had been published virtually every month for 26 years.

In response to a list of questions sent by The New York Times, a Hearst spokeswoman emailed a statement. "E. Jean Carroll was long a beloved voice in the pages of Elle, the decision not to renew her contract was a business decision and had nothing to do with politics," it said.

Even if Ms. Carroll did not blame Elle, others did, and were quick to say so. Soon, the hashtag #BoycottElleMagazine began appearing on Twitter.

"Extremely disappointing from the woman's mag that historically has done more hard hitting reporting and taken stands than most," Clara Jeffery, the editor of Mother Jones magazine, wrote on Twitter.

"If you ever wondered whether women's magazines are really on the side of women, I think this says all we need to know," said Nancy Jo Sales, a magazine writer.

Many editors who have worked with Ms. Carroll say Elle has lost an important voice. "E. Jean is an American original and to many, an icon," said Robbie Myers, the longtime editor of Elle, before Ms. Garcia.

"E. Jean was just so beloved," said Maggie Bullock, a former deputy editor at Elle. "It seems really sad that a women's publication that had the chance to align itself with a woman who was speaking her truth — and speaking truth to power — in a time like this, chose not to. What a shortsighted thing to do."

But inside the Hearst building in Midtown Manhattan this week, some journalists quietly fumed at what they saw as an inaccurate portrayal.

More than a dozen current and former Hearst employees, who spoke to The Times anonymously for fear they would face repercussions in their jobs, attributed Ms. Carroll's contract termination, at least in part, to a steep paycheck and a break in convention: Ms. Carroll had given away the news-breaking excerpt from her book to New York magazine — not Elle. (The New York cover story, "Hideous Men," was edited by Laurie Abraham, one of Ms. Carroll's former editors at Elle. Ms. Abraham now works at The Atlantic.)

Some said that Ms. Carroll's contention that Mr. Trump's insults cost her the columnist job was self-serving, since her defamation lawsuit against him will require her to prove she has been damaged by his remarks.

Ms. Carroll dismissed those comments. “The lawsuit is for all women who have been harassed, who cannot speak up and don’t have the money to sue,” Ms. Carroll said. “I am speaking out now for the women who have spoken out and have met their doom. Sometimes you speak out against a man in power and you lose your job.”

Ms. Carroll has been credited with helping to shape the advice column genre and voice, inspiring modern-day iterations like Ask Polly, published by New York magazine, and “Dear Sugars,” an advice column turned podcast.

“She didn’t just toss off a bunch of ! uff — she used research, referenced current events and politics, interviewed experts and actually gave real advice that often was as much about helping get a woman’s career on track as a relationship,” said Ms. Bullock, the former Elle editor, now a freelance writer. “Early on, Jean was inclusive and, you could argue, ‘woke.’”

But the days of lucrative magazine contracts are largely a thing of the past. When Ms. Garcia took over Elle, Ms. Carroll was being paid \$120,000 a year for 12 columns of about 1,800 words each. (At about \$5.50 per word, that was more than twice the \$2 per word usually paid to Elle’s freelance writers for the print magazine.)

When Ms. Carroll’s contract came up for renewal during Ms. Garcia’s ! rst year, editors went to bat for Ms. Carroll, arguing that her column had become synonymous with the Elle brand.

Ms. Garcia gave Ms. Carroll a new contract: \$60,000 per year for 12 columns of 900 words.

Changing of the Guard

The changes at Elle, many of them in response to the economic challenges of the magazine industry, re! ect big shifts at its parent company, Hearst, which is also facing tension with employees who recently unionized.

In 2018, David Carey, the president of Hearst Magazines for eight years, stepped down. Troy Young, who had previously overseen the company’s digital efforts, succeeded him. Since then, most of the high-pro! le editors who served under Mr. Carey have left. (In 2019, Mr. Carey was named by Hearst Corporation as senior vice president of public affairs and communications.)

Ms. Garcia has worked to put her own stamp on Elle. She has made the magazine more visual, and amped up its social media presence. She has dedicated less space to political features, which had been a hallmark of Elle under its previous editors. Its annual women-in-Washington “Power List” magazine feature and awards dinner was canceled under Ms. Garcia.

She has also worked hard to avoid ruf! ing feathers, according to some current and former employees. In a 2017 article about Whitney Wolfe, the founder of the dating app Bumble, several paragraphs detailing her perspective on feminism were removed from the digital version of the article after Ms. Wolfe complained that the quotes were taken out of context, according to four former staffers who were aware of the discussions. (Later, Hearst worked with Bumble to start Bumble Mag.)

Last winter, a pro! le of Dr. Jen Gunter, the ob-gyn (and New York Times columnist) who has been a critic of Gwyneth Paltrow and Goop, was killed after top editors expressed concern that it might upset Ms. Paltrow and her publicist Stephen Huvane, who represents a variety of celebrity clients, according to three former staffers. (Ms. Paltrow appeared on a November 2019 cover of Elle.)

Sources also said a pro! le of Lara Trump, the president’s daughter-in-law, was published in the print magazine but not on the Elle website because of fear it would stoke rage online.

After sending the statement about Ms. Carroll, Hearst did not respond to questions about these editorial decisions.

Shifting Loyalties

By the time Ms. Carroll was deciding where to excerpt her book — and publish her accusation that the sitting president had raped her years before — Ms. Carroll didn't consider Elle.

"Under Nina, Elle has been less into politics or news," Ms. Carroll said. "Nina's Elle is a fashion magazine. So I went with New York magazine, which knows how to break news."

That decision was revealed to Elle editors over drinks at the Russian Tea Room last spring, where Ms. Carroll and a few of the editors had gone to celebrate the upcoming publication of her book. It was there that she told the editors what the book was about — including what she had written about Mr. Trump — and that an excerpt containing this revelation would be running in New York magazine.

"They were extremely disappointed," Ms. Carroll said of the Elle editors.

They told Ms. Carroll that they were shocked, both by what she said had happened to her and by the fact that she had not given Elle first dibs on the excerpt.

By the terms of her contract, Ms. Carroll was not required to offer her story to Elle. But she agreed to help facilitate a phone call between Elle editors, her agent and a representative of her book publisher.

The excerpt still was published by New York.

When it came time to make budget cuts this past December, Hearst employees said, few felt lingering loyalty to Ms. Carroll. That's when Ms. Hobday told her she had been cut loose.

In a statement, Ms. Garcia, said: "E. Jean and I have known each other for more than two decades and she will always be part of the Elle DNA. We applaud and support her for coming forward with telling her story. The response to her allegations were not a factor in not renewing her contract."

Ms. Carroll is under no illusion that she was carrying the magazine into the next era. "I AM old, unhip and uncool, yes," she wrote on Twitter. But she doesn't believe Elle gave her the boot simply because it couldn't afford her. "I would have taken a new contract for less money," she said.

By Thursday, Ms. Carroll said she had received inquiries from four other publications asking if she would consider writing for them.